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# Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2678

September 9, 1994

**PUBLIC HEARINGS ON USE OF "FRESH" ON RAW POULTRY LABELS** -- USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has announced it will hold three public hearings in September on the use of the term "fresh" on the labeling of raw poultry products. The hearings are scheduled for Sept. 12 in Modesto, CA; Sept. 16 in Atlanta, GA; and Sept. 20 in Washington, DC. Each hearing will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. local time. FSIS Administrator Michael Taylor says "Proper use of the term 'fresh' on raw poultry labels is an important issue and we want to hear from all interested parties as we reexamine our policy." Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy directed FSIS to reexamine the current policy to ensure it "is reasonable and meets today's consumer expectations and to make sure any policy change does not open the door to problems like the growth of bacteria that can cause foodborne illness." **Contact: Patrick Collins (202) 720-7943.**

**AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FORUM IN FEBRUARY** -- USDA will hold its first agricultural economic outlook forum on February 22 and 23, 1995 in Washington, DC. The forum will replace the 70-year-old outlook conference that USDA traditionally held each December. Based on feedback from conference participants and users of the information, the conference is being redesigned to add a new longer term focus that will help farmers, agribusiness and policy officials make strategic decisions for the future. **Contact: Raymond Bridge (202) 720-5447.**

**OVER \$16 MILLION IN EWP FUNDS TO FLOODED SOUTHERN STATES** -- USDA will provide over \$16 million in Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program funds to Alabama, Florida, and Georgia as a result of flooding and excessive rainfall from Tropical Storm Alberto. USDA's Soil Conservation Service (SCS) administers the program. EWP provides assistance to local governments for the removal of imminent hazards to life and property from floods and the products of erosion caused by natural disasters. **Contact: Brad Fisher (202) 720-4024.**

**NEW PARENT'S GUIDE FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS** -- USDA released its Parent's Guide for Healthy School Meals, a back-to-school checklist for parents to help their children make sound food choices in the school cafeteria. USDA's Food and Consumer Services Assistant Secretary Ellen Haas says, "USDA wants to give parents some back-to-school supplies. We want children to get the same nutrition message at the kitchen table at home that they do in the lunchroom at school." The Parent's Guide is part of USDA's efforts to promote the health of children by improving the National School Meals Programs. **Contact: Phil Shanholtzer (703) 305-2286.**

**RECORD SALES YEAR FOR FARMER COOPERATIVES** -- Higher prices for livestock and poultry, and increased sales of grains, oilseeds and farm supplies helped U.S. farmer cooperatives set a new, net business volume record of nearly \$83 billion in 1993. Record sales levels were attained despite a drop in the number of U.S. farmer cooperatives. While sales volume was up, net income for cooperatives declined for the second straight year. **Contact Dan Campbell (202) 720-6483.**

**NOSB FORWARDS NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS RECOMMENDATIONS --** The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) has forwarded most of its recommended standards for the National Organic Program to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service Administrator Lon Hatamiya says, "These recommendations will be used as a foundation for developing the national program." The board's recommendations include an organic farm plan for both crop and livestock producers and an organic handling plan for handlers and processors. **Contact: Connie Crunkleton (202) 720-8998.**

**USDA HELPS FEEDLOT INDUSTRY FOCUS ON FOOD SAFETY --** With the help of feedlot operators, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is researching the presence of Escherichia coli 0157:H7 and Salmonella in U.S. feedlot cattle. For the primary study this fall, named the Cattle on Feed Evaluation (COFE), USDA and state veterinarians will collect approximately 12,000 fecal samples from 100 feedlots in 13 states to test for the presence of 0157. About 4,000 samples will be collected for Salmonella testing. The goals are to estimate the prevalence of 0157 and salmonella in feedlot cattle and to identify management factors associated them. **Contact: Margaret Webb (301) 436-7799.**

**USDA NAMES TWO FOOD SAFETY OFFICIALS --** Two nationally-recognized food safety experts have been named to senior positions in USDA. Michael Taylor, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) made the announcement September 1. Thomas J. Billy will serve as Associate Administrator of FSIS. Billy was the Director of the Office of Seafood, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the Food and Drug Administration. Dr. J. Glenn Morris, Jr., a physician, medical professor, and expert on foodborne disease and prevention, has been named to head a new Health Affairs Staff within FSIS. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy said, "These appointments reflect this Administration's commitment to building the strongest possible food safety program." **Contact: Patrick Collins (202) 720-7943.**

**STUDENTS ARE GOING BACK TO SCHOOL WITH A FOOD SAFETY MESSAGE --** An overwhelming number of requests has sparked the printing of an additional 3 million postcards from the USDA which includes this simple message: "Recipe for a Safe and Delicious Hamburger--No matter how you top it...Before you take a bite, make sure it's brown in the middle." USDA, in cooperation with the National Association of School Nurses, began distributing these postcards in May to educate children and their parents about the need to eat only thoroughly cooked hamburgers. However, requests by school nurses depleted the original printing of two million cards, which led to the reprinting of an additional 3 million cards over the summer. The cards are available in English and Spanish. **Contact: Mary Ann Parmley (202) 690-0351.**

**USDA PROHIBITS CERTAIN PLANT IMPORTS --** USDA is taking action to prevent the introduction of several exotic plant diseases into the U.S. by prohibiting the import of certain plants. Deputy Administrator for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection's plant protection and quarantine B. Glen Lee says, "We are prohibiting the importation of strawberry plants from all countries except Canada and Israel, the import of currant plants from New Zealand, and the import of both species of sentry palm from everywhere except Lord Howe Island, Australia." The prohibition against imports of these plants will help prevent diseases that can damage or kill plants and reduce fruit production. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 436-3256.**



## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA # 1945** -- It's called the "Farm Bill" and every five years Congress renews this piece of legislation that now contains billions of dollars of programs like Food Stamps, School Lunch, environmental issues and more. **Gary Crawford** takes an in depth look at the consumer side of this bill. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME # 1426** -- Fall vegetable garden; the "farm" bill could be a consumer bill; an environmentally correct garden for children; tips for healthy school meals; 4-H and non-farm kids. (Weekly cassette -- 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE FEATURES #1936** -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy visits Russia; the budget and the Farm Bill; China and export grain credits?; the "greying" of U.S. farming; 1994 wheat deficiency payments. (Weekly cassette -- news features.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE.** These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newslines carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. -- Monday, September 19, sugar and sweeteners outlook; Tuesday, September 20, ag outlook; weekly weather and crop outlook; Thursday, September 22, livestock, dairy and poultry outlook; U.S. ag trade update.

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

**COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- Lynn Wyvill reports on U.S. agricultural research to Central Europe; Pat O'Leary reports on Jefferson Letters found at USDA Library.

**ACTUALITIES** -- USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crops; excerpts and B-roll from Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy's recent visit to agricultural co-ops in Moscow.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on natural access for groundwater research.

### SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

*Galaxy 7, Transponder 9, Channel 9, Audio 6.2 or 6.8, Downlink frequency 3880 Mhz.*

*Available on Thursdays 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., EDT; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., EDT.*

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.

Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

## OFF MIKE

**WHAT A HAM!**...that's the best way to describe the one that sold in Kentucky recently for \$57,683 -- \$3,700 a pound. **Jack Crowner** (Kentucky Agriculture Network, Louisville, KY) was the auctioneer getting this record price for the Grand Champion ham at the Kentucky Ham Contest. Jack says the previous record was \$2,500 a pound. Proceeds from the sale go to the highest bidder's favorite charity. At this year's event, 1,800 enjoyed a country ham breakfast. In addition to his farm broadcasting duties, Jack has been auctioneering for 31 years.

**TOTALLY DIGITAL**...is the way **Mississippi Network** (Jackson, MS) has been operating since August 29. **John Winfield** says the transformation is complete and that he is recording most of his stories directly into a computer. He admits to using a reel-to-reel tape recorder for some of those longer interviews. John says there are many options for digital operations at a single station, but there were a few challenges to overcome in the transition for their entire network. He reports that Mississippi is experiencing a good crop year for cotton, soybeans and corn. John is this year's vice president of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters.

**NEW RADIO STUDIO CONSTRUCTION**...is underway here at USDA. Renovation has begun on the new location for USDA's radio operations. These facilities are being constructed adjacent to our TV studio operations in the South Agriculture Building. Once completed, we will have more customized space for our radio staff to continue producing our daily newslines and weekly features, and we'll have new areas that will help us respond to specific interview requests from broadcasters. The co-location of radio and TV operations will enhance our joint coverage of many news events and establish a Broadcast Center where we can more efficiently share equipment and capabilities.

**FEEDBACK**...is not something you want to hear during a live broadcast (as a squeal or technical problem), but it is something I would like to hear from you regarding the radio and TV services that we offer to broadcasters. Also, I am anxious to share experiences you are having in covering food and agriculture and to report on new directions you may be taking in your broadcast work. We'd like to hear from you!



**LARRY A. QUINN, Director**  
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center



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